

Breastfeeding / Chestfeeding Policy

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative - Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive - Policy	Executive Director, Human Resources
Responsible Manager - Policy	Director, Capability and Culture
Review Date	14 May 2027

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to outline La Trobe University's (the University) commitment to support parents/carers who are breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing milk while at La Trobe campuses.

(2) This Policy is aligned with the [La Trobe University Enterprise Agreement 2023](#) (Enterprise Agreement) which states that the University will support breastfeeding/chestfeeding (clause 46.18) as set out in policies and procedures, as well as the University [Flexible Work Policy](#) in relation to lactation/feeding breaks at work.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to:

- a. All staff
- b. Contractors
- c. CONAGOTHS (Consultant, Agency or Other)
- d. Students, honoraries and visitors across University campuses

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
As required, implement flexible working to support feeding/lactation breaks	Managers and staff

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(4) The University recognises the importance of parents/carers having time and space to feed their babies and support staff, students and visitors who wish to breastfeed/chestfeed their baby or express, while they participate in work, study or visitation on campus and in University related activities. Staff, students and visitors have the right to breastfeed/chestfeed and express in public places, or where they feel most comfortable. It is unlawful to treat a

person less favourably on the basis that they are breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing.

(5) The University is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and safe environment for all staff and students, including parents and carers. The University is responsible for ensuring that staff, students and University visitors have access to suitable facilities for breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing, and is committed to providing the following support and provisions:

- a. Feeding/lactation breaks
- b. Flexible work options
- c. Breastfeeding/chestfeeding/expressing/parenting and carer dedicated facilities
- d. Protection from unlawful discrimination or harassment.

(6) The University encourages all staff and management to have a welcoming and inclusive approach to support people who are breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing.

(7) In order to support staff returning to work following a period of parental/carer leave, the University will provide a supportive environment, including reasonable adjustments and flexible working to enable staff to continue to breastfeed/chestfeed and express.

(8) In 2010, the University received accreditation from the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace. The University is committed to maintaining this accreditation by continuing to provide a breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing friendly environment by allowing time and a private space for staff, students and visitors to feed and express during working hours and create a culturally supportive work environment.

(9) In alignment with being a Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding and expressing friendly workplace, staff, students and visitors attending the University campus to participate in University employment, study, programs, activities and events can access breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing facilities and should refer to the Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding Facilities [webpage](#) for details of campus facilities and contact points for assistance.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Staff Feeding/Lactation Breaks

(10) The University provides staff with the flexibility to take feeding/lactation breaks during their workday.

(11) Staff who leave campus to feed their baby, or have their baby brought on to campus or who express milk, should discuss their feeding/lactation break requirements with their manager.

(12) The number of times people need to feed or express milk will be determined by the individual needs and age of the baby. The younger the baby, the more frequently a parent is likely to need to do so.

(13) Staff working 7.25 hours on any day are entitled to one or more paid daily feeding/lactation breaks of up to one (1) hour per day (in total). Staff working more than 3 hours on any day are entitled to one or more paid daily feeding/lactation breaks of up to 30 minutes (in total).

(14) For staff requiring additional time for feeding/lactation breaks, a flexible work arrangement should be implemented to cover the excess time as detailed in Part B of this Policy.

(15) The period of paid feeding/lactation breaks includes travelling time for staff who take feeding/lactation breaks off campus.

(16) In reviewing how much time staff require for a feeding/lactation break under this policy, they should consider:

- a. time-off to express or to breastfeed/chestfeed;
- b. a short period of time to travel/return home for the purpose of feeding or expressing;
- c. flexible start and finishing times;
- d. allowing lunch and/or other breaks to coincide with feeding or expressing times, if preferred.

(17) Car parking will be made available for parents/carers bringing a baby into the workplace to be breast/chest fed. Staff should discuss their requirements with Traffic & Parking, via the contact details listed on the La Trobe Car Parking website.

Part B - Flexible Work Options

(18) The University provides staff with flexible work options to balance their work and breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing requirements in accordance with the [Flexible Work Policy](#).

(19) Flexible work arrangements are offered in addition to the feeding/lactation breaks as outlined in Part A above, in accordance to staff eligibility, needs and appropriateness.

(20) Flexible work arrangements that may be considered as part of a request under the [Flexible Work Policy](#) may include:

- a. time-off to express or to breastfeed/chestfeed;
- b. travelling/returning home for the purpose of feeding, if the travel time is reasonable;
- c. flexible start and finishing times.

(21) Staff requesting flexible work arrangements for breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing purposes should follow the procedures outlined in the Flexible Work Policy.

(22) Staff should also refer to the:

- a. [Parental leave](#) (staff intranet)
- b. [Flex work](#) (staff intranet)
- c. [Hybrid and Flexible Ways of Working](#) (staff intranet)

Part C - Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding/Parenting/Carer Facilities

(23) Breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing facilities are available via dedicated rooms equipped with a refrigerator, freezer, sink, table, chair and microwave and are located on each of the following campuses Bundoora, City Campus, Bendigo, Shepparton, Albury-Wodonga and Mildura.

(24) Designated breastfeeding/chestfeeding/expressing and parenting rooms are available during normal working hours for those seeking privacy whilst breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing. These facilities are shared with students and University visitors. Where a room is occupied by another user, the room can be shared by mutual agreement with the residing occupant.

(25) Location details for all available facilities are on the University's Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding Facilities [internet](#).

(26) Staff wishing to utilise the facilities are responsible for:

- a. supplying their own expressing equipment and appropriate storage containers for expressed breast milk;

- b. clearly labelling their containers with their name and date before placing them in the designated refrigerator; and
- c. observing any guidelines about the use of the designated room, including being considerate of other users by ensuring facilities are left in neat, clean and hygienic conditions.

(27) All breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing facilities have a contact person. Please see the Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding and expressing Facility Locations and Contacts [webpage](#) for more information.

(28) Staff who are unable to access breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing facilities on Campus, or who are not working on a La Trobe University campus should contact Ask HR, who will triage the query and refer the matter on to the appropriate contact to manage. Options may include liaising with our partners to provide similar facilities for staff located at non-University campuses e.g. hospitals.

(29) Staff, students, visitors and other associates of the University can breastfeed/chestfeed and express anywhere on La Trobe campuses, with the exclusion of locations detailed in the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#), which are deemed hazardous to children.

Part D - Supporting Individual Needs

(30) The University recognises that the individual needs of the parent, carer and baby will vary, and is committed to providing work arrangements that will meet the needs of the staff member as well as operational requirements.

(31) Managers will be required to take into account both the staff member's and the university's operational requirements when considering requests for flexibility to accommodate breastfeeding/chestfeeding/lactation.

(32) Minor alterations to working arrangements can be agreed and documented between the staff member and the manager e.g. short term requirement for breastfeeding/chestfeeding/lactation breaks.

Part E - Protection from Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment

(33) Being treated unfairly or harassed because of the need to breastfeed/chestfeed or express is contradictory to the University's [Code of Conduct](#), [Workplace Behaviours Policy](#), our cultural qualities and values and it is unlawful. Under the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#) (Cth) it is illegal to discriminate against a person either directly or indirectly on the grounds of breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing. Under the [Fair Work Act 2009](#), it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against a person who is breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing.

(34) The University does not condone staff who engage in behaviour that discriminates against another person, either directly or indirectly, and has established procedures for dealing with complaints through the [Workplace Behaviours Policy](#) and the [Workplace Issue Resolution \(Staff\) Procedure](#) outlined in the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

(35) Any person at the University who experiences or witnesses discrimination or harassment because of the need to breastfeed/chestfeed and express should contact Safer Community to report concerning behaviour and for further guidance and support. Staff may also contact their HR Business Consultant for advice.

Part F - Support Services

(36) There are support services available to assist or support staff and to provide information, advice or appropriate referrals. Support options may include:

Internal Support

- a. Manager

- b. Human Resources via Ask HR
- c. [Staff Health and Wellbeing](#)
- d. [Safer Community](#)
- e. [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team](#)

External Support

- a. [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) - National Breastfeeding Helpline 1800 686 268 or email vicoffice@breastfeeding.asn.au
- b. [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) - Call 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327) to access EAP 24 hours 7 days per week pager service

Part G - Roles and Responsibilities

(37) It is important that both staff and managers remain flexible, accommodating, and respectful of each other's needs.

(38) Decisions made regarding the provision of breastfeeding/chestfeeding/parenting/carere breaks and flexible work options must be fair, transparent and capable of review. An agreement between the staff member and La Trobe may be effective in this regard (a clear, well written email will suffice as an agreement).

(39) Staff are responsible for:

- a. Discussing requirements with their manager as soon as possible;
- b. Keeping infants under the direct and regular supervision of the parent or carer at all times;
- c. Taking both La Trobe and personal needs into account, with a focus on minimising disruption in the workplace, when determining the timing of feeding/lactation breaks; and
- d. Notifying their manager if their breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing needs change, or cease.

(40) Managers are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring all staff understand their rights and responsibilities under this Policy and procedure, as well as the [Flexible Work Policy](#);
- b. Supporting breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing requests in line with operational requirements and the provisions of this Policy and procedure;
- c. Ensuring that written requests from staff for flexible working arrangements are handled in accordance with the [Flexible Work Policy](#);
- d. If, due to operational needs, there is a need to delay the taking of a feeding/lactation break, efforts should be made to ensure that the staff member is able to take the break as soon as possible in order to minimise any risks to the staff member's health or milk supply or the child's health.

(41) Human Resources is responsible for the implementation and ongoing facilitation of support for breastfeeding/chestfeeding or expressing staff members through the following channels:

- a. Ensuring all managers are aware of this Policy via various communication methods;
- b. Provision of breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing information where appropriate;
- c. Providing information regarding this Policy and other relevant information to staff members when appropriate/requested.

Section 7 - Definitions

(42) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Breastfeeding: is the act of feeding a baby from the breast.
- b. Chestfeeding: is the act of feeding a baby from the chest. The term chestfeeding is used alongside breastfeeding and is often used by trans, nonbinary and gender diverse people as it aligns with their gender.
- c. Expressing: is the act of using a pump or one's hands to release milk from the breast/chest, not during feeding. This is done to ensure milk can be stored to feed the baby at a later time.
- d. Breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing facilities: includes the range of facilities needed to enable staff to breastfeed, chestfeed, express breast milk or engage in an activity necessary to the act of breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing. It also refers to a room within University grounds which has been identified as a suitable space for feeding an infant or expressing milk. A list of breastfeeding/chestfeeding facilities can be found [here](#).
- e. Feeding/lactation break is a break taken by staff to breastfeed/chestfeed, and express or otherwise engage in an activity necessary to the act of breastfeeding/chestfeeding and expressing.
- f. Flexible work arrangements are a change to a staff member's usual work arrangements that balances the staff member's need for flexibility and University operational requirements, in accordance with the [Flexible Work Policy](#).

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(43) This Policy is made under the:

- a. [La Trobe University Act 2009](#)
- b. [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)
- c. [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
- d. [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 \(Cth\)](#)
- e. [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Cth\)](#)
- f. [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
- g. [Gender Equality Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)

(44) Associated information includes:

- a. [La Trobe University Enterprise Agreement 2023](#)
- b. [Flexible Work Policy](#)
- c. [Gender Equity Policy](#)
- d. [University Code of Conduct](#)
- e. [Workplace Issue Resolution \(Staff\) Procedure](#)
- f. [Workplace Behaviours Policy](#)
- g. [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

Status and Details

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Effective Date	14th May 2024
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Approval Date	14th May 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Regan Sterry Executive Director, Human Resources
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).